


Campus Threat Assessment Teams and Tools


Governor's Campus Preparedness Conference
August 3, 2010

Campus Threat Assessment Teams and Tools



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Overview of Threat Assessment

A systematic process that is designed to:

- 1) • Identify persons of concern
- 2) • Gather information/investigate
- 3) • Assess information and situation
- 4) • Manage the situation





Beware the lure of the Black Swan

Attributes of Black Swan Events:

- Rarity,
- Extreme impact,
- Concocted, retrospective predictability.

The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable
Nassim Nicholas Taleb (2007)

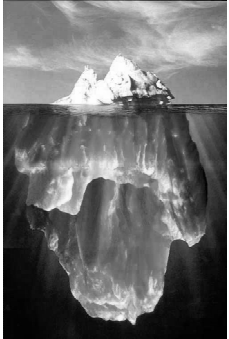
Goal:
Case Management
Vs.
Prediction of Violence


Beyond The Tip of the Iceberg

Beyond Mass Shootings

- A broad range of issues impact the safety and well-being of college campuses.
 - Harassment
 - Bias-related incidents
 - Stalking
 - Domestic abuse
 - Sexual assault
 - Substance abuse
 - Mental illness
 - Suicide



Keep the Big Picture in Mind



Integrated Case Management

Effective case management incorporates interventions in each of the (relevant) factors:


S De-escalate, contain, or control the **subject** who may take violent action;

T Decrease vulnerabilities of the **target**;

E Modify physical and cultural **environment** to discourage escalation; and,

P Prepare for & mitigate against **precipitating events** that may trigger adverse reactions.

© Deisinger, Randazzo, et al (2008)

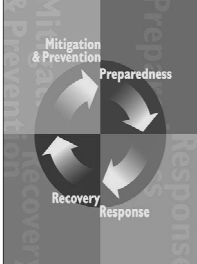



Context of Safe Campuses

Comprehensive Safety Planning

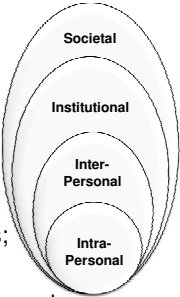
Pro-active plans in place to:

- Prevent and mitigate violence
 - Identify at-risk situations
 - Assess situations
 - Intervene & manage concerns
- Prepare for potential violence
- Respond to violent acts and
- Recover from the event.





Effective Prevention Strategies Are:

- Comprehensive;
- Systematic and theory driven;
- Collaborative;
- Socio-culturally relevant;
- Appropriately timed;
- Delivered by well-trained staff;
- Utilize multiple & varied methods;
- Sustained over time;
- Continuously evaluated and improved.



Nation, M., et al (2003). What works in prevention: Principles of Effective Prevention Programs. *American Psychologist*, 58, 449-456.

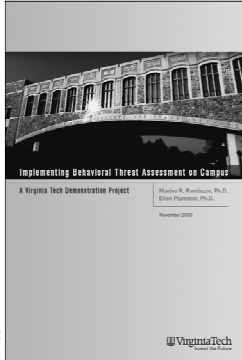
 **VirginiaTech**
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Lessons Learned:

Implementing Behavioral Threat Assessment on Campus: A Virginia Tech Demonstration Project

Grant funded by U.S. Department of Education


Free download at:
www.threatassessment.vt.edu



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Ongoing Challenges

- Team complacency
 - Smaller case load and/or few serious incidents can impact threat assessment process, decision-making
- Team name selection
 - Consideration of team name and potential impact on reporting
 - Helps to distinguish from other teams (e.g. Care Team, Employee Assistance Team)

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Ongoing Challenges

- Continuing silos/Information obstacles
 - Clear mission statements aid referral to correct team
 - Same personnel on multiple teams can enhance info flow
 - Exploit existing relationships, create others
- Case management resource availability
 - Identify list of resources on- and off-campus early on, amend regularly
 - Identify community support, solicit involvement before a crisis

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Case Management at Virginia Tech

- Human Resources
 - Faculty/staff assistance
- Office of the Dean of Students
 - CARE Team – student assistance
- Cook Counseling Center
 - Hospitalizations, specialized services
- Police Department
 - Threat Assessment Team coordination

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Ongoing Challenges

- Legislative issues
 - Identify campus resource to help track potential legislative issues
 - Cultivate relationships with legislators, educate them on misconceptions
- Police involvement on the team
 - Investigative resource
 - May be privy to information that cannot be shared
 - Creative communication strategies

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Consultation with Administration

- Advocate for the TA process – including resources for training
- Advocate for management decisions made by the TAT
- Maintain the confidentiality of clients
- Strongly suggest dual referral of individuals of concern (counseling & administrative)



All that Glitters, is Not Gold

Campus Safety as a Cottage Industry

- Focus on reactive or simplistic methods
- Sudden “expertise”
- Untested and unsupported approaches

Caveat Emptor

- Emphasize proactive methods
- Vet vendors carefully
- Integrate tested approaches



Authority for a Team

Va. Code § 23-9.2:10.

- D. The board of visitors or other governing body of each public institution of higher education shall establish a specific threat assessment team that shall include members from law enforcement, mental health professionals, representatives of student affairs and human resources, and, if available, college or university counsel. Such team shall implement the assessment, intervention and action policies set forth by the committee pursuant to subsection C.



Code Amendment: Records Access

- E. Each threat assessment team shall establish relationships or utilize existing relationships with local and state law-enforcement agencies as well as mental health agencies to expedite assessment and intervention with individuals whose behavior may present a threat to safety. Upon a preliminary determination that an individual poses a threat of violence to self or others, or exhibits significantly disruptive behavior or need for assistance, a threat assessment team may obtain criminal history record information, as provided in §§19.2-389 and 19.2-389.1, and health records, as provided in §§32.1-127.1:03. No member of a threat assessment team shall redisclose any criminal history record information or health information obtained pursuant to this section or otherwise use any record of an individual beyond the purpose for which such disclosure was made to the threat assessment team.



Amends Code Governing Criminal History Record Information

Va. Code: §19.2-389. Dissemination of criminal history record information.

- A. Criminal history record information shall be disseminated, whether directly or through an intermediary, only to:
25. Members of a threat assessment team established by a public institution of higher education pursuant to §23-9.2:10, for the purpose of assessing or intervening with an individual whose behavior may present a threat to safety;



Amends Code Governing Criminal History Record Information

VA Code: 19.2-389.1. Dissemination of juvenile record information.

Record information maintained in the Central Criminal Records Exchange pursuant to the provisions of §16.1-299 shall be disseminated only:

- (x) to members of a threat assessment team established by a public institution of higher education pursuant to § 23-9.2:10, to aid in the assessment or intervention with individuals whose behavior may present a threat to safety.



Amends Virginia Health Records Privacy Act

Va. Code: § 32.1-127.1:03. Health records privacy.

D. Health care entities may, and, when required by other provisions of state law, shall, disclose health records:

35. To a threat assessment team established by a public institution of higher education pursuant to §23-9.2:10 when such records concern a student at the public institution of higher education, including a student who is a minor.



TAT Records Exclusion from FOIA

VA Code: §2.2-3705.4.

The following records are excluded from the provisions of this chapter but may be disclosed by the custodian in his discretion, except where such disclosure is prohibited by law:

8. Records of a threat assessment team established by a public institution of higher education pursuant to §23-9.2:10 relating to the assessment or intervention with a specific individual.



TAT Records Exclusion from FOIA

VA Code: §2.2-3705.4.8 (continued)

However, in the event an individual who has been under assessment commits an act, or is prosecuted for the commission of an act that has caused the death of, or caused serious bodily injury, including any felony sexual assault, to another person, the records of such threat assessment team concerning the individual under assessment shall be made available as provided by this chapter, with the exception of any criminal history records obtained pursuant to §19.2-389 or 19.2-389.1, health records obtained pursuant to §32.1-127.1:03, or scholastic records as defined in §22.1-289. The public body providing such records shall remove information identifying any person who provided information to the threat assessment team under a promise of confidentiality.



Research



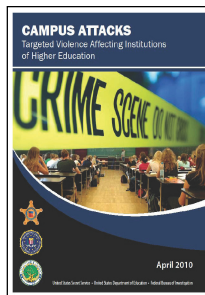
Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education

Joint Project of the

- US Secret Service
- US Department of Education
- Federal Bureau of Investigation

Attacks: 1900 – Present

- 272 incidents
 - Rate rises with enrollment



Source: U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Dept. of Education, & Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010). *Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education*.

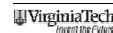


Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education

About the Incidents

- Occurs on and off-campus
 - 80% on-campus (residence, grounds, class/admin)
 - 20% off-campus (residence, public area)
- Precipitating events present: 83%
- Targeted one or more specific persons: 73%
- Pre-incident threat/aggression to target: 29%
- Pre-incident concerns reported by others: 31%

Source: U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Dept. of Education, & Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010). *Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education*.



Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education

About the Perpetrators

- Age: 16 – 64
- Gender: Male (80%); Female (20%)
- Status:
 - Current / Former Student: 60%
 - Current / Former Employee: 11%
 - Indirectly Affiliated: 20%
 - No known Affiliation: 9%

Source: U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Dept. of Education, & Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010). *Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education*.



Tools



Using Assessment Tools

Systematize data collection and assessment:

- Spousal Risk Assessment Guide (SARA);
- Violence Risk Assessment Guide (VRAG);
- Cawood / White Assessment Grid;
- MOSAIC;
- Classification of Violence Risk (COVR);
- Workplace Assessment of Violence Risk (WAVR-21).

Note: This is a partial listing of such instruments and not an endorsement of any particular approach.



Using Assessment Tools

Appropriate use of instruments:

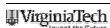
- Ensure that instrument is reliable and valid;
- Be aware of limitations of the instrument;
- Use for purpose for which it was designed.
- Stay current with new data and versions;
- Ensure evaluator is properly trained;
- Avoid reliance on instrument only;
- Integrate information with structured professional judgment.

Source: *Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence*
Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP).

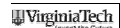


Supplemental Tools: Collaborate!

- Student Assistance / CARE Teams;
- Faculty / Staff Assistance Teams;
- Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART);
- Domestic Assault Response Teams (DART);
- Violence Prevention Committees;
- Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT);
- Suicide Prevention Programs;
- Diversity and Climate Programs.



Training



Campus Threat Assessment Teams and Tools



Governor's Campus
Preparedness Conference
August 3, 2010

20th Annual Threat Management Conference

August 17-20
Disneyland Hotel
Anaheim, CA

Register at:
www.atapworldwide.org

Sponsored by:
Association of Threat Assessment Professionals
Los Angeles Police Department

**Campus Threat Assessment Training:
A Multidisciplinary Approach for IHE**

September 14, 2010: Seattle, WA
October 5, 2010: Sioux Falls, SD
December 2, 2010: Atlanta, GA
January 11, 2011: Phoenix, AZ
February 8, 2011: Orlando, FL

Register at:
www.campusthreatassessment.org

Sponsored by:
US Department of Justice,
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services





**Campus Threat Assessment Teams
in a Higher Education Setting**

October 7, 2010
University of Richmond
Richmond, VA

Register at:
www.dcjs.virginia.gov

Sponsored by:
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES
Improving and promoting public safety in the Commonwealth



**Advanced Threat Assessment Training
for Higher Education: Issues & Practice**


September 10, 2010: Charlottesville, VA
University of Virginia

October 6, 2010: Hampton, VA
Thomas Nelson Community College

November 3, 2010: Manassas, VA
George Mason University- Prince William

Register at:
www.dcjs.virginia.gov/vcss/training/1011/TATHigherED.cfm

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**Symposium on Threat Assessment
Issues and Practices**

November 12, 2010: Blacksburg, VA
Virginia Tech

Presenters:
Gene Deisinger, Ph.D. – Virginia Tech
Greg Eells, Ph.D. – Cornell University
Peter Lake, JD – Stetson College of Law
Andre Simons, M.A. – Federal Bureau of Investigation

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Register at: www.dcjs.virginia.gov

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